

In the year she has worked in my office, Renette has become an essential member of the team and a valued connection to the Air Force. She has worked with my policy team to host over 30 meetings with Arizona constituents on a range of topics related to the Nation's defense. She has assisted in making informed recommendations on confirmation votes, cosponsorships, and hearing preparations. She has helped us draft thoughtful and influential policy that I know will help the servicemembers and families of Arizona. Renette has been a steadfast protector of Arizona military missions and communities.

Moreover, Renette went above and beyond to adapt to dynamic staffing in my office. She led our defense team for several months, including coordinating with a legislative correspondent, policy aide, and our defense outreach team across three geographically dislocated offices. In this role, she planned, organized, and directed a staff delegation to multiple bases throughout Arizona and engaged with senior leaders in the military, as well as business, academic, and community stakeholders. She also successfully supported my requests to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022.

I am incredibly proud of the work accomplished by Lieutenant Colonel Hilton throughout this challenging year. She has set an outstanding example for others, and my team and I will miss her.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BEN COOPER

• **Mr. BLUMENTHAL.** Mr. President, today I rise to recognize Mr. Ben Cooper, a lifelong resident of West Hartford, CT, and outstanding World War II veteran who turns 100 on December 24, 2021.

Mr. Cooper was a freshman at The George Washington University when the United States entered World War II. Eager to support his country, he went to work at Colt's Firearms in Connecticut, where he tested machine guns until he was drafted in September 1942. Mr. Cooper was sent for training at Camp Barkeley. While on furlough, he met his future wife, Dorothy, and the two married when he received news he was going to be sent overseas. Mr. and Mrs. Cooper had four children and celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary shortly before Dorothy passed.

After boarding a liberty ship, Mr. Cooper was assigned as a combat medic to the U.S. Army's 45th Infantry Division, also known as the Thunderbird Division, which was largely comprised of Native American soldiers. They saw combat in Italy, France, and Germany. While in Europe, Mr. Cooper was instructed by his friends to keep his dog tags in his pocket rather than around his neck. They were labeled with an "H" for Hebrew, indicating his Jewish

faith, which could have led to harm if he were captured by the Germans. In April 1945, the 45th Infantry Division received orders to secure a camp. As Mr. Cooper explains, no one in the division knew anything about the camp other than their instructions to not allow anyone to enter or exit.

When Mr. Cooper and his division arrived at Dachau in southern Germany, they witnessed scenes he describes as "virtually unspeakable." He met the survivors who were able to walk up to him and was traumatized by what he encountered. On April 29, 1945, the 30,000 prisoners were liberated by American troops, including Mr. Cooper and the 45th Infantry Division. In the following days, the division helped capture Munich.

Though the division was sent to France with the expectation of fighting the Japanese, they were instead discharged when the war ended before they made it to the Pacific. Mr. Cooper returned home to his family and did not speak about Dachau to anyone for 45 years.

In 1990, Mr. Cooper shared his story for the first time, speaking to a group of students. From there, he started to recount his experiences wherever it could be helpful. For over three decades, Mr. Cooper has spoken to schools, colleges, civic groups, and archival projects, repeating his eyewitness account to make sure the realities of the Holocaust are not forgotten.

His speaking engagements have led to a number of remarkable events. At the annual Holocaust commemoration at the Connecticut State Capitol in 1996, he met a man who revealed he and his wife were liberated from Dachau by Mr. Cooper and his division. They recognized the Thunderbird logo on his jacket. The two families became friends, and in 2006, their son performed open heart surgery for Mr. Cooper, who mused, "what goes around comes around."

In 2017, Mr. Cooper was inducted into the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame, and in 2019, he received the *Légion d'honneur*, France's highest military merit. That same year, I had the privilege of presenting Mr. Cooper with a certificate of special recognition at the Connecticut Veterans Memorial, where he also received the Connecticut Wartime Service Medal from the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Cooper's lifetime of service and advocacy serves as a model for all of us. On his business cards is the motto that guides him: "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

Mr. Cooper's courage and compassion will be an enduring legacy. I applaud his many accomplishments and hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating Mr. Ben Cooper on this milestone of his 100th birthday.●

TRIBUTE TO AVERY HERRMANN

• **Mr. MARSHALL.** Mr. President, I rise today to honor and recognize a

young Kansan who has truly gone above and beyond to help others, Ms. Avery Herrmann from Sabetha, KS.

Avery has been making jewelry since 2017 to help support the Kansas Honor Flight. She first began designing jewelry after developing staphylococcal in her right eye. Doctors had told her and her mother, Mary, that Avery should pick up a hobby to help keep her motor functions developing properly. Mary had made jewelry herself as a child, so she showed Avery the tools of the trade, and she hasn't stopped since.

For a while, Avery had kept up with jewelry making for personal use, but the death of her grandfather Robert in 2016 showed her what she could do to make a difference with her skills. Robert was a Korean war veteran who had previously gone on an Honor Flight himself, which was one of his most memorable experiences. After his passing, Avery started Abundant Love jewelry as a tribute to her grandfather and a way to support veterans in her community. With this new business, she began selling earrings online and at various fundraising events. To date, Avery has raised almost \$7,000 through Abundant Love.

Stories like Avery's are what truly show the best of Kansas. I have met with countless veterans on Honor Flights, and each has their own unique and incredible experience like Robert. Avery already is selfless in making and selling her earrings to benefit Honor Flight, but what truly makes this project extraordinary is that she doesn't take a penny for herself. Every single dollar made from Abundant Love goes directly to Honor Flight's benefit. Whether she knows it or not, those veterans appreciate what she does for them, and I join them in showing my appreciation for Avery. I now ask my colleagues to join in me in recognizing Avery for her outstanding service for our Nation's heroes.●

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND ALVIN C. HATHAWAY

• **Mr. VAN HOLLEN.** Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a faith leader and community activist from my home State of Maryland who has recently stepped down from his post as senior pastor at Union Baptist Church: Reverend Alvin C. Hathaway. I would like to honor his service to the people of Maryland and enter the details of his journey into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so that current and future generations may learn from and study his inspiring career.

The story of Reverend Hathaway's life is deeply bound to the story of Union Baptist Church. Alvin Hathaway grew up on Druid Hill Avenue in West Baltimore in a family that believed deeply in combining education and service—four doors down from the church itself—and he came of age in a neighborhood shaped and nurtured by faith. That community had cradled other great leaders too—leaders who,